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ABSTRACT

Noting the importance of cultural diversity in American society and of the role of bilingual-bicultural education in maintaining such diversity, this paper discusses the commitment of the Federal government to quality and equality in education as related to linguistic minorities. Legislation such as the Bilingual Education Act and the Lau vs. Nichols decision is discussed, as well as implementation and action taken to ensure that local school districts comply with the law. Specific Federal initiatives to this end include the establishment of general assistance centers and the providing of grants by the Office of Education's Division of Equal Educational Opportunity. Federal aid has been provided in the areas of research, teacher education and curriculum development. A study of four exemplary projects was undertaken, and project information packages are being developed as a result, to help new or existing projects. Funds were distributed for teacher training. The scope of the training activities is outlined. Nine Materials Development Centers and three Dissemination-Assessment Centers are supported by the Office of Bilingual Education and service twelve languages. Most recent educational legislation is committed to helping bilingual learners. The role of parents as educators is seen as crucial as Federal programs in the success of bilingual-bicultural education. (CLK)

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THE FEDERAL COMMITMENT TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION *

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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It is indeed a pleasure for me to address the International Bilingual-Bicultural Education Conference. I am always glad for an opportunity to talk with colleagues who are deeply committed to their goals, and I know of no educators who have worked harder -- or produced so many results for their constituents -- as you. It has not been easy, but you have opened the eyes of educators, legislators, and administrators across the country to see that bilingual-bicultural education is essential if we are to meet the goal of equal opportunity for education for all our citizens.

There is no better time than this, our Bicentennial year, to re-examine and reflect on the fundamental principles upon which our Nation was built.

First, it is wise to remember that our inheritance stems not only from European settlers but also from the American Indians, from the Africans brought to this country, and from later immigrants from all over the world. "Variety is the spice of life" may be an old cliche, but it is certainly true in America. It is precisely this diversity in our culture and history that has made America rich. Bilingual-bicultural education can make an important contribution to maintaining the pluralistic, and rich, identity of our Nation.

Another thing to remember during the Bicentennial year is that most of America's early settlers came here to realize a dream of liberty, tolerance, and respect for all people. We have not yet fully realized that dream, but we should never lose sight of it. It is one in which education -- with its two key words quality and equality -- plays a crucial role.

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Most of you are directly involved in helping minority students attain a quality education through equality of opportunity. It would be an exercise in futility to tell you why we need bilingual-bicultural education. Several million non-English speaking children told you that long ago. However, I thought it would be appropriate for me to talk about the Federal commitment to quality and equality as they relate to our linguistic minorities.

While I most assuredly recognize we have a long way to go, I believe we are on our way toward surmounting the most difficult hurdles, and with fairly remarkable speed. It was only eight years ago, after all, in 1968, that Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act -- the Bilingual Education Act -- gave Federal recognition to academic instruction using languages other than English.

I'd say the most telling effect of the Bilingual Education Act has been to heighten the expectations of many minority youths. Until its passage, many minority group advocates didn't feel they had a prayer of seeing their needs answered. The act gave people the impetus to go to State and local legislators for support, and many States amended or repealed their "English-only" laws.

The second major breakthrough for our linguistic minority children was the 1974 Supreme Court decision in Lau v. Nichols. The Court ruled that failing to teach English as a second language or to provide other adequate instruction to non-English speaking students virtually shuts the door on their chance for a meaningful education and thus violates Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

As you all know, the Lau decision sent many school administrators into a panic. The court required a school district to devise a plan which it felt would enable all the children in the district to progress in school. Suggested methods ranged from English as a second language, to transitional language, to

language maintenance, to bilingual-bicultural education. A district might choose one or more of these -- or some other method althogether. Whatever method it might choose, however, the Lau decision meant that States and local communities must work toward a permanent, comprehensive program.

The Lau decision also gave HEW's Office for Civil Rights a new job -- to make sure that local school districts comply with the Civil Rights Act as the court had interpreted it.

As a first step, the Office for Civil Rights identified 334 school districts, most of them in the southwest and far west, that either had more than 4,000 national origin minority students not receiving any type of special language instruction, or had more than 1,000 national origin minority students of whom fewer than 10 percent were receiving special instruction.

Many other districts with smaller but still significant enrollments of non-English speaking students were left to be identified later. Meanwhile OCR sent the districts already identified a form which asked two things: First, how do you identify children as non or limited English speaking? Second, what kind of instructional services do you provide for them?

OCR's 10 regional staffs are now analysing the responses. If they decide a district is not complying with the law, the district must come up with an acceptable instruction plan to meet the needs of its linguistic minority students.

A number of Federal initiatives are under way to help school districts comply with the law. Let me touch on a few of these briefly.

The Office of Education's Division of Equal Educational Opportunity has funded nine General Assistance Centers, or "Lau Centers," as they are commonly called. These centers are consulting organizations staffed with professional educators who help school districts design education programs, in particular those

school districts found not to be in compliance with the law. A Lau Center will provide such services as analyzing data, sending a team to examine the needs of the student population, and working out solutions which the school district may choose to follow.

An Office for Civil Rights task force put together a document suggesting remedies which a school district might consider for its own use. All the Lau Centers have copies of it. However, let me say again that at the present time the Office for Civil Rights is applying these measures only to the 334 districts selected as I have just explained.

The Divison of Equal Educational Opportunity also makes grants to school districts under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act to employ advisory specialists to assist the superintendent in devising plans related to desegregation, including race, sex, and non or limited English speaking children. A State department of education is eligible for a grant to help it disseminate information and give technical assistance on the compliance requirements.

I have gone into this much detail because I know there's been some confusion over the different eligibility requirements of the compliance programs and Title VII programs. Both have a complementary and parallel goal -- that is, to give non-English speaking students the same opportunities afforded other children. The difference is that the programs I have just been explaining to you are designed specifically for those districts <u>not in compliance</u> with the law, whereas Title VII grants are awarded wholly on a competitive basis and aim to help <u>any</u> district with a high concentration of non-English speaking students.

Although Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act, has been funded since fiscal year 1969, the Education Amendments of 1974 really laid the groundwork for helping our linguistic minority children. While we recognized the value of

classroom demonstration projects -- and the greatest proportion of our funds still goes for that purpose -- we also knew they had reached only a small number of students. So our program was broadened to include long-range capacity building efforts, efforts that would help the States build their own capacity to serve the limited English speaker.

The problem that school districts face in meeting their obligations is likely to be of relatively short duration, primarily involving certain initial investments and start-up costs. After all, the salary of a teacher who speaks two languages will be about the same as that of a one-language teacher, and curriculum materials in another language will cost about the same as those in English. The expense comes in preparing a competent staff and developing curriculum materials.

Three vital parts of capacity building need our Federal dollars most -- research, teacher training, and curriculum development.

In research, both the Office of Education and its sister agency, the National Institute of Education, are conducting studies of the impact of bilingual education in general and the relative effectiveness of various strategies. Some of the projects NIE is supporting focus on helping teachers adapt instructional procedures for language and social skills and developing intercultural reading materials.

Sarita Schotta will tell you more about these and other NIE projects tomorrow. I will discuss today only those studies carried out by the Office of Education. There are several, but I'd like to share with you the findings of one in particular -- our Exemplary study -- because I think it will have a great impact in the near future.

OE has long believed that the true effectiveness of its demonstration projects can be measured only by the extent to which they serve as replication models for program planners in other local districts. With this in mind, we set out on a nationwide search for projects considered exceptionally effective in meeting the needs of our language minority children.

Four Title VII projects were identified as exemplary by the Office of Education's Dissemination Review Panel. Three of them, serving children from Spanish-speaking homes, are in Texas -- at Alice, Corpus Christi, and Houston. The fourth, for children from French-speaking homes, is at Madawaska, Maine.

The exciting thing is that these four projects are being developed into Project Information Packages -- comprehensive guides and detailed materials explaining how to establish and adapt the programs to other school districts. The purpose, of course, is to assure successful results nationwide by conveying both instructional and management techniques in an easy-to-use format. The packages will include teacher training handbooks, filmstrips and cassette tapes, evaluation guides, teacher guides, community-relations material, resource lists -- in short, everything you would need to set up an effective bilingual education program. Our contractor is field testing the projects before the final packages are put together. In the meantime, Title VII Resource Centers are stocked with preliminary models of the four packages and are getting the word out that they are there for the asking.

Teacher training is our second focus of capacity building. It is estimated that, to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking children alone, between 48,000 and 77,000 bilingual teachers are needed. Incidentally, that is a hint for those seeking training in fields where it will be easier to get a job. It's also a hint

to colleges and universities attempting to plan their programs in step with the changing job market -- and to State and local officials who set priorities and determine budgets.

This year Title VII set aside for training activities more than $22 million out of its total $85-million budget. Activities included inservice training for nearly 14,000 teachers, aides, and administrators, and preservice training for about 3,300 persons. Some 474 students at 30 higher education institutions received a total of $3 million in graduate fellowships to prepare them as trainers of bilingual education teachers, and 35 institutions of higher education received funds to improve their bilingual education teacher training programs. Finally, our seven training resource centers received $3.5 million to train approximately 6,000 bilingual education classroom personnel.

For the year coming up, we've upped our figure for training activities to more than $25 million. With this we expect to award more than 500 graduate fellowships, train more than 25,000 bilingual personnel through the classroom projects, and open some new resource centers.

I know that a speaker always takes the risk of turning his audience off with statistics, but I hope these figures help to illustrate the broad scope of the training activities we are engaged in. Applications for training grants, by the way, are due in to our Office of Bilingual Education on May 24, three weeks from today.

Finally, the third part of our capacity building is curriculum development. Several of our evaluation studies have pointed to the need for high quality instructional materials. This year the Office of Bilingual Education is supporting two types of centers addressing this problem -- nine Materials Development Centers to research and put together instructional materials which can be used by a number of projects, and three Dissemination/Assessment Centers

whose task is to assure that the materials are in fact high quality and, subsequently, to get the materials to the children in need. These 12 centers service 12 languages. Next year we expect to have 18 centers, and our goal is to service 14 languages.

Fourteen languages may seem like a drop in the bucket, especially when you consider that our classroom projects are helping children in 44 languages, but they are definitely a start.

We need to involve the commercial publishers and audiovisual producers in our quest for bilingual materials, and probably the best asset we have in this endeavor is the vocal and committed bilingual community. It is through your initiative that so many changes have occurred thus far and, as the needs of our bilingual children continue to become known to the general public, I am confident that the commercial publishers will begin answering the call.

As for the audiovisual producers, Children's Television Workshop, the producer of Sesame Street and The Electric Company, has already included some segments which address the non or limited English speaker and is considering including more. It is reviewing the statistics on the number of language minority children in this country. The statistics speak clearly, and we are hoping that other publishers and media producers will examine them too -- and then do something.

It is encouraging that practically all the education legislation coming out of Congress lately has included a commitment to the bilingual learner. We now have a bilingual vocational training program, for instance, to prepare persons of limited English speaking proficiency as semi-skilled or skilled workers. The program offers training to dropouts, to high school graduates,

and to persons who have already entered the labor market but need additional training to get a better job. In 1976, $2.8 million is available for bilingual vocational training.

In all, there are 16 different sources of help for language minority students in the Office of Education, and they span the spectrum of elementary and secondary, postsecondary, occupational, adult, and vocational education, and education for the handicapped. Funds come from the Right To Read, the Teacher Corps, the Library Resources program, and the Office of Indian Education, to name just a few. Some colleges and universities with large numbers of minority students receive money from our Strengthening Developing Institutions Program.

Some of our most exciting projects are in educational television. "Villa Alegre," "Carrascolendas," and Mundo Real" are all half-hour series which use English and Spanish interchangeably and focus on the Latin-American culture. Educational concepts are, of course, tied in to the programs' content.

These shows are already having a great impact -- not only on the Spanish-speaking child who is learning English in an enjoyable way, or the Anglo child who is picking up some Spanish, but also, in terms of cultural understanding, on all viewers.

As I run through the various programs in the Office of Education that are geared to our linguistic minority children, the mention of these television programs brings up a basic point. Children learn in many different ways, and going to school is only one way. Schools are essential, to be sure, but they are not the only forum for the exchange of information or the acquisition of skills. Most people quoted in several recent reports said that most of what they know they learned at home. This was followed by what they had learned on the job.

The important message here is that parents play a vital role as educators. Moral values, social behavior, and learning habits are taught at home. Just as important are a sense of worth and a feeling of cultural and ethnic pride, which are products of bilingual-bicultural education just as desirable as academic opportunity.

We in the Office of Education have made bilingual-bicultural education a top priority, but groups like this one, the National Task Force de la Raza, the Asian-American Commission, the National Association of Native American Bilingual Educators, and many others must cooperate if a capacity building effort is to succeed. But what we really need is a partnership among all the levels of government. States must recognize their responsibility to expand their efforts and their dollar commitments. And local school districts must see to it that quality programs are implemented.

Change is always too slow to satisfy any of us fully, but I believe the tide is definitely turning in the direction of equal opportunity for our minority students. It will take all of us -- educators, legislators, advocates, and administrators -- to make sure that it keeps turning. I don't doubt for a moment that we can do it.

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